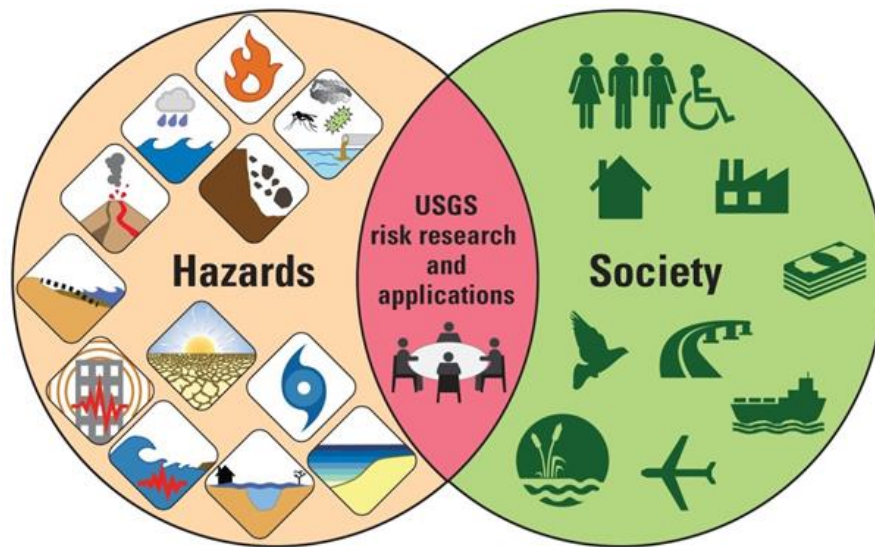


USGS Risk Research and Applications FY22 Request for Proposals Guidance Document



**Proposal Deadline:
January 28, 2022**

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Overview	3
Background & Goals	3
Goals	4
Theme: Risk Multipliers	4
Fit	5
Eligibility	5
Financial and Administrative Information	5
Information for Awardees	6
Travel During COVID-19	6
Application Process & Timeline	6
Letter of Intent (Required)	7
Proposal	7
Timeline	7
Meeting Attendance and Reporting Requirements	8
Evaluation Criteria.....	9
Contact Us	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Overview

In September 2018, the USGS published [Science for a Risky World: A Plan for USGS Risk Research and Applications \(Circular 1444\)](#) (“Risk Plan”). The Risk Plan is a roadmap to ensure that USGS hazards information is incorporated into risk assessments and other products that can be readily used by decision makers to reduce loss. Part of implementing the Risk Plan is to make resources available to USGS scientists and staff to advance bureau capacity in risk research and applications.

Funding provided by this RFP is intended to supplement existing projects and is not intended to fund projects in full. This document describes the USGS Risk Research and Applications RFP process for FY22. **Proposals are due January 28, 2022.** Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.

Please contact riskyworld@usgs.gov with any questions. Note all application materials, resources, and FAQs are posted [online](#).

Background & Goals

The USGS serves an important role in the characterization and communication of risk posed by an array of hazards. This role becomes increasingly vital as hazards continue to disrupt both the built and natural environments, and as human populations expand into hazard-prone areas. The USGS has a rich history of providing critical information to decision makers to support mitigation of loss and the Risk Plan emphasizes the next step in providing this information. For example, we know a hazard might occur in a particular location; but, what’s at stake -- and for whom? How might livelihoods, economies, and communities be disrupted by such an event? And how can we effectively combine our understanding of the physical processes of these hazards with the anticipated social consequences to better safeguard communities and assets of concern?

The Risk Plan characterizes risk as the confluence of a hazard with societal assets or systems exposed to that hazard. Specifically, *risk* is defined as *the potential for full or partial loss of something of societal value due to current or proposed courses of action under conditions of uncertainty regarding real-time and future adverse events*. The portfolio of USGS risk research and applications includes peer-reviewed publications, actionable hazard assessments, and decision-support systems, and is further described in Section 1 of the Risk Plan.

The Risk Plan recognizes that “within the Bureau, no one science center will have all the capabilities and capacity to ensure the success of this Plan. Involvement of science centers across mission areas and regions will help increase communication and collaborations.” To this end, recommendation 6.1 states “develop a Bureau-level request for proposal (RFP) process to enable USGS science centers to contribute to various products recommended in this Plan (for example, databases, guidelines, courses, workshops, detail opportunities, mentoring).” This RFP was created to implement this recommendation.

The Risk RFP funded 8 projects in FY19, 7 projects in FY20, and 7 Projects in FY21. These projects span multiple disciplines and topics- a list of project titles is available at the [USGS Reducing Risk website](#). Presentations on the FY19 projects are available [here](#), FY20 projects [here](#), and FY21 [here](#).

Goals

For FY22, the goals of the RFP are to:

- Grow, share knowledge, and build capacity across the USGS Risk Research and Applications Community of Practice (CoP)
- Incentivize cross-center, cross-mission area, and interdisciplinary research
- Incentivize a focus on meaningful stakeholder engagement before, during, and after the development of products intended to support risk reduction.
- Identify and support projects that advance different elements of the Risk Plan. This may include building partnerships; product evaluation/user research and testing; workshops; product visualization and tool development.
- Advance USGS goals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) by considering DEIA as a cross-cutting concern for research design, team formation, and product development, including helping to ensure that USGS science is useful and usable for groups that are disproportionately impacted by hazard events, especially underserved communities¹ (e.g., low-income, elderly, minoritized, or with a disability).
- Use funded projects to demonstrate lessons learned and identify new resources for pursuing work in risk research and applications.
- Leverage foundational datasets and advance decision support tools to communicate risk (for example, for a tool that currently shows hazard probability, funding could be applied to add exposure or vulnerability).

Theme: Risk Multipliers

In FY22, competitive proposals should:

- Address risk multipliers like climate change, cumulative hazards, and social vulnerabilities. Risk multipliers amplify threats by creating conditions where damages, losses, or impacts are compounded. For example, climate change may create conditions that favor more powerful hurricanes as sea level rises, a community may face flood and

¹ “(a) The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

(b) The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.” [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government | The White House](#)

COVID impacts cumulatively, and social vulnerabilities can limit adaptive capacity, response, and recovery efforts such that impacts from hazard events are felt for longer periods of time. At the same, a community's efforts to build resilience to one threat may make them more resilient to other threats as well; and,

- Explicitly identify the stakeholders and/or users of the proposed work and describe how these groups will benefit from the project deliverables and processes.

Fit

Proposals that would *not* be a good fit for the Risk RFP:

- Projects that do not advance the goals of the USGS Risk Plan.
- Projects that focus entirely on hazard characterization/assessment. The Risk Plan (and this RFP) focuses on the intersection of hazards and society; projects solely focused on hazards and not their potential impact to assets of societal value will not be as competitive.
- Projects that would normally be funded through programmatic funding.
- Projects that request funding for new geological and/or biological fieldwork.

Eligibility

USGS personnel in any mission area, region, program, or center are welcome to submit proposals. All proposals must specify a USGS Federal employee as the lead Principal Investigator (PI). Lead PIs may be permanent employees or term employees; post-doctoral researchers are eligible to be PIs. USGS personnel may be involved in more than one proposal but may be the lead PI on only one proposal. If you received funding from the Risk RFP in any previous cycle, you are not eligible to be a lead PI in the FY22 cycle. Projects that are continuations of projects funded in the FY20 FY21 cycle will not be as competitive as new ideas or new directions.

External partners may be engaged in any project; however, USGS cost centers will be responsible for the flow and transfer of funds to external partners (including student support). Cost centers will be responsible for initiating purchase requisitions and tracking obligations for any funding used for contracts. It will be the responsibility of the cost center to ensure that Bureau deadlines are met with regards to any initiated acquisitions.

Financial and Administrative Information

In FY22, we plan to fund multiple projects. Proposals should target the \$25,000-\$75,000 range and should not exceed \$100,000 including overhead. Proposals will be evaluated by a panel using the Evaluation Criteria described below. Awards will be announced beginning on March 21, 2022. Subject to appropriation, funding will be distributed to the lead PI's cost center. Those not awarded will also receive notification.

Information for Awardees

For awardees, the process for distributing funding will only begin when the approved proposal is entered in BASIS+ as a New Project at the awarded cost center and has been approved by the Risk CoP managers. Lead PIs should follow the [FY2022 Bureau-wide Guidance: Budget and Science Information Systems Plus \(BASIS+\)](#) (must be on DOI network or VPN to view) and relevant Financial Operating Procedures (FOP) Chapters to complete BASIS+ entries for their project and contact their Administrative Officer for assistance. Please ensure that the project and task narratives and budget information are populated using the information from the awarded proposal. Those who receive funding will be required to submit a 6-month Annual Task Progress Narrative to be entered in BASIS+. The award letter will contain additional details and further instructions.

The lead PI's awarded cost center will be responsible for appropriate management of any further distribution of funds (e.g., distribution to other centers and/or partners). All funds from this award must be tied to the approved project in the awarded cost center. WBS set up by other cost centers where funds have been further allocated must be attached to a task in the main project.

The spending period for awards will be from the date of the award to March 31, 2023. All funds must be expended – not just obligated – by March 31, 2023. Expenditures beyond March 31, 2023 will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will only be considered in situations where extenuating circumstances exist that are beyond the control of responsible financial management by the awarded cost center. If you will require expenditures beyond the established spending deadline, you must request an extension with justification via email to Kris Ludwig (kaludwig@usgs.gov, cc riskyworld@usgs.gov) no later than 30 days prior to the deadline for consideration and approval.

In the event you are unable to complete the proposed work due to unforeseen circumstances, please contact Kris Ludwig at kaludwig@usgs.gov, copy to riskyworld@usgs.gov, immediately to discuss options for moving forward.

Travel During COVID-19

Travel expenses related to the proposed work must be included in the budget. However, in light of the ongoing uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic, proposals must include a contingency plan for all travel funds if travel is restricted during the duration of the award due to COVID-19.

Application Process & Timeline

Below is a description of the steps in the application process and timeline. [Please read these instructions carefully.](#)

Letter of Intent (Required)

A Letter of Intent is required for your proposal to be considered. The Letter of Intent process is not intended to evaluate proposals - it is to provide staff with an opportunity to discuss fit with proponents and a sense for the types of projects that are being proposed, primarily to help determine review panel composition and fit for this RFP.

To submit: Use the [FY22 Risk RFP Letter of Intent Form](#) to submit your information by **December 1, 2021**. Please note that you will be asked to submit an Estimated Requested Amount, an Abstract (250 words maximum), and an Impact Statement (100 words maximum) describing how your proposed project relates to the Risk Plan and the FY22 Goals and Theme. You are encouraged to consult with your Center budget analyst on your estimated budget so that your estimates are close to what will be in your proposal.

The form must be completed in one session - you cannot save and return to a partially completed form. You also cannot edit a previously submitted form. We recommend drafting the content in the Word template (available on the [Risk COP wiki](#)) before completing this form. Please save a copy for your records and for sharing with your Center budget analyst and/or supervisor.

After submission, your LOI will be checked for completion, and you will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 3 business days of submission, please contact riskyworld@usgs.gov.

Proposal

All proposals must use the FY22 Risk RFP Proposal Template (available on the [Risk COP wiki](#)). Proposals have multiple required fields.

To submit your proposal: Use the FY22 Risk RFP Proposal Template and send your **pdf-version** proposal as an email attachment with the filename format (PILastName_RiskProposal_FY22.pdf) to riskyworld@usgs.gov. Please title your email "PILast Name - FY22 Risk Proposal." Do not send separate files. Do not deviate from the template. **Proposals are due January 28, 2022 at 11:59p ET.** Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered. A confirmation email will be sent to you within 2 business days of receipt of your proposal. If you do *not* receive a confirmation email, please contact riskyworld@usgs.gov.

Timeline

Date	Activity
October 21, 2021 1:00p ET	RFP informational webinar
December 1, 2021	Deadline for Letter of Intent (required)

January 28, 2022 11:59pm ET	Deadline for Proposals
February, 2022	Panel Meeting (exact date TBD)
March 21, 2022	Awards announced
August, 2022	Face-to-face meeting (exact date and format TBD)
October 1, 2022	Progress report deadline and check-in meeting (see below)
March 31, 2023	All work must be completed. Award funding must be <i>expended</i> (not just obligated).
June 30, 2023	Summary reports due

Meeting Attendance and Reporting Requirements

For PIs of successful proposals, meeting attendance and participation requirements include:

- Lead PIs are expected to regularly participate in monthly meetings for the Risk Research and Applications Community of Practice (CoP), which are held virtually on the 3rd Thursdays of every month at 1p ET.
- The lead PI (or one designee) is also required to attend the 2022 Face-to-Face Meeting of the Risk CoP. Due to ongoing uncertainty with travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the format of these meeting (virtual or in person) will be determined in the Spring of 2022. If the meeting will be held in person, travel funding to attend this meeting will be provided separately (and should *not* be included in the proposal budget).
- Lead PIs may be called upon to be proposal reviewers for future proposal cycles.
- If you will be hosting any workshops, focus groups, or meetings, invitations to riskyworld@usgs.gov are encouraged, if possible. This can help foster learning and adaptive management of the granting process in the future.

Reporting requirements include:

- Each lead PI is required to present a project summary at a future Risk COP monthly meeting.
- Each lead PI must submit a brief progress report by October 1, 2022. A template will be provided.
- Each lead PI must complete a 30-minute check-in call in October 2022 to share progress. This is an opportunity to provide constructive feedback about the grant program and to share any lessons learned. This may be used for a short project profile in the monthly risk newsletter.
- All lead PIs must submit a report summarizing their work and the balance of their expenditures by June 30, 2023. A template for the report will be provided in advance of the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

For FY22, proposals will be reviewed by a panel consisting of USGS scientists and staff. *Please keep in mind the panel may or may not have specific subject matter expertise in line with your proposal and any special terminology, acronyms, or procedures should be explained.* The panel will use the following criteria to evaluate the proposals:

Statement of Problem (25%)

Proposals should include the question or issue this work will address and why the work is needed and/or important. Proposals will be evaluated based on whether or not the proposed work adequately advances goals described in the Risk Plan (e.g., advancing and creating partnerships; product evaluation/user research and testing; workshops; product visualization/tool development, specific recommendations in the Plan) and how the proposed work addresses the RFP Goals and the FY22 RFP theme.

Strategy and Approach (25%)

Describe the project objectives, how these will be achieved, and how project success will be evaluated or indicated. Proposals will be evaluated based on: 1) viability of the described objectives and activities, given the requested and/or in-kind provided resources and the expertise of the team (noted in the Project Team and Project Team and Collaboration sections of the Proposal Template); and 2) innovation of the described activities, methods, and/or products.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (10%)

Proposals will be evaluated on how they contribute to promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace and in risk research and applications. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including but not limited to the following. (For more discussion and examples, see the recordings from the Risk CoP annual meeting on equity in risk research and applications ([Recording 1](#), [Recording 2](#)):

- *Project team:* Demonstrating how your project team strengthens the participation of under-represented and/or minoritized groups (across gender, race and ethnicity, career stage, etc.) in USGS scientific work. This should reflect a holistic approach to building and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive team, not simply a count of under-represented populations.
- *Approach:* Incorporating consideration of concepts like environmental justice or “vulnerability bearers” (see [Resources](#)) and/or demonstrating the impact of hazards to frontline communities through the proposed work.
- *Partnerships and/or Stakeholders:* Forming or leveraging a collaborative partnership with a stakeholder organization representing the voices of frontline communities (please also demonstrate how you will share data and/or information back with stakeholders and maintain long-term trusting relationships).
- *Connections to Policy Priorities:* Including project goals and/or research questions that consider Executive Orders 13985 and 14008.

Project Team and Collaboration (15%)

Proposals will be evaluated based on the demonstrated connection between the experience and skill sets of the project team and the proposed work. Evaluation will also consider whether the proposed work demonstrates cross-center, cross-mission area, multidisciplinary collaboration. Team members should be identified and listed as named individuals (in addition to roles) in the final proposal whenever possible; proposals with not-yet-identified team members may be less competitive. Letters of support (max. 1 page each) from partners, stakeholders, community leaders, and groups are encouraged but not required.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer (10%)

Proposals will be evaluated on their demonstrated commitment to being part of the Risk Research and Applications Community of Practice (CoP) (e.g., including but not limited to attending monthly meetings, volunteering presentations, sharing resources with CoP members). We appreciate innovative ideas for co-producing project goals, participatory research questions, sharing lessons learned, disseminating results both internally and externally, and creating resources that build capacity across the Risk CoP.

Please note that meeting the Meeting Attendance and Reporting Requirements described above are the minimum requirements for this section.

Timeline (5%)

Proposals will be evaluated on the clear description of project deliverables and activities and their feasibility during the project timeline. The timeline must indicate complete expenditure of funds by March 31, 2023. Please be sure to factor in Paperwork Reduction Act or other approvals if/as necessary for work involving non-federal participants. Recognizing the USGS publication process may take additional time beyond the end of the project, indicate the anticipated publication date for any publications resulting from the project.

Budget (10%)

Proposal budgets will be evaluated on the appropriateness and justification of proposed costs, including salaries, travel, equipment and supplies, and other direct costs. The budget narrative must include explanations of how the proposed expenses will be used to complete and deliver proposed deliverables. Proposals exceeding \$100,000 (including overhead) in requested funds will not be considered. Projects with external partners (e.g., via contracts and/or cooperative agreements) must describe how the contract work will be initiated and managed. Please work with your Center budget analyst to develop an accurate budget.

Contact Us

We are available to brainstorm ideas and potential team members with you. Please email riskyworld@usgs.gov to set up a time to meet.